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INTERGOVERNMENTAL NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE FOR
THE ELABORATION OF AN INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION
TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION IN THOSE COUNTRIES
EXPERIENCING SERIOUS DROUGHT AND/OR
DESERTIFICATION, PARTICULARLY IN AFRICA
Sixth session
New York, 9-20 January 1995
Agenda item 5

REVIEW OF THE SITUATION AS REGARDS EXTRABUDGETARY FUNDS

Note by the Secretariat

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INTRODUCTION

1. The purpose of the present note is to provide information on the activities of the Secretariat, on administrative and budgetary matters, and on the need for contributions to the Special Voluntary Fund and to the Trust Fund established by General Assembly resolution 47/188.

2. In addition, in light of the adoption by the INCD of the Convention and of the resolutions on interim arrangements and on urgent action for Africa, the Secretariat presents a prospective study of activities envisaged for the interim period leading to the first session of the Conference of the Parties, together with preliminary cost estimates.

3. The Committee may wish to:

(a) take note of the information presented;

(b) make recommendations on the mobilization of extrabudgetary funds in the future; and

(c) make recommendations on the proposed uses of the funds and activities of the Secretariat.

4. This note is divided in two sections. The first section presents an update of pledges and contributions to the Trust Fund and of staffing arrangements, as well as a preliminary forecast of activities that may be undertaken by the Secretariat during the interim period under the INCD's guidance, together with a financial estimate for such activities. The second section presents an update of the pledges and contributions to the Special Voluntary Fund and an estimate of funding requirements for the future.

SECTION ONE: TRUST FUND FOR THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS

I. STATUS OF PLEDGES AND CONTRIBUTIONS

5. By its resolution 47/188, the General Assembly decided that the Secretariat would be funded through existing United Nations budgetary resources and voluntary contributions to a Trust Fund established specifically for that purpose. Since the Secretariat relies entirely on these two sources to finance its operations, the funding requirements for the Trust Fund are directly related to the amount allocated from the regular UN budget. Thus, it is difficult to assess the requirements for the Trust Fund until the amount to be allocated to the INCD for 1995 from the regular UN budget is known. An addendum to this document will be circulated as soon as this information is available.

6. A compilation of pledges and contributions to the Trust Fund, as of 20 November 1994, is shown in Appendix A.

7. As of 31 October 1994, expenditures from the Fund amounted to US$1,958,297. Commitments remaining for staff indicated in subsection II amount to a further estimated US$200,000. After provision for support costs and operating reserve, the Fund is virtually exhausted. Expenditures in support of Secretariat activities have been made as follows:

	US Dollars
Staff costs	873,062
Consultants	1,182
Expert groups meetings	111,306
Travel of participants to meetings	208,198
Official travel of staff	211,026

Contractual services	6,470
Communications	34,207
Miscellaneous expenses	1,153
Contributions in support of preparatory activities	511,653
TOTAL	1,958.257

II. THE SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO SECRETARIAT STAFFING

8. The staffing situation of the Secretariat, as of November 1994, is shown in Appendix B. It does not include consultants or temporary staff hired to assist the Secretariat during sessions of the Committee.

9. Contractual arrangements relating to the positions covered by the Trust Fund continue to be of a short-term nature owing to the uncertainty of funding. The extension of the contracts of the seven staff members currently financed from extra-budgetary resources depends on the timely receipt of contributions.

10. Several staff members were recruited using the resources available in the Fund on the basis of agreements with specific countries and organizations. The extra-budgetary contributions used for the recruitment of staff members as well as the staff members concerned are set out in the Appendix C, together with a footnote showing the expiry date of these agreements.

11. The following additional information is also of relevance:

(a) The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) has provided the services of a professional staff member for a period of six months, from 1st November 1994, and the secondment of a general service staff member is being finalized;

(b) FAO has also extended the services of an Environmental Lawyer to assist the Secretariat on a part-time basis;

(c) Italy has recently confirmed its willingness to second a junior professional officer to the Secretariat; the incumbent will be working for a period of one year in the field of media and communications;

(d) Two temporary staff members have been recruited to assist professional staff members in their daily work and WMO seconded a staff member as of December 1994.

III. ACTIVITIES OF THE SECRETARIAT AND STAFFING REQUIREMENTS

12. This section seeks INCD guidance on the activities of the Secretariat during the interim period and the consequent requirements with respect to staffing and budget. It should be read in conjunction with document A/AC.241/29, which provides details with respect to the INCD's work programme for that period.

13. Consistent with the Convention and the resolution on interim arrangements, the Secretariat established pursuant to General Assembly Resolution 47/188 will serve as the Interim Secretariat of the Convention until a Permanent Secretariat is designated by the Conference of the Parties and begins operating.

14. During the interim period, the Secretariat will continue its work in support of the Committee. In addition, it has been requested to facilitate the implementation of the resolution on urgent action for Africa. Following is a brief analysis of proposed Secretariat activities and of estimated staffing and extra-budgetary resources required. The figures are intended to reflect the

annual cost of each function. However, some activities may require that the greater portion of disbursements be made in 1995, while others may require greater disbursements in 1996. Some of these activities may be undertaken by other organizations under parallel funding arrangements, outside the framework of the Trust Fund. In any event, each activity would be undertaken in full coordination with concerned programmes, agencies and international organizations.

15. At this early stage of a new phase in INCD'S work, the proposals are necessarily tentative. They depend on guidance by the Committee and on resources available from the regular budget and voluntary contributions. They will be refined in light of the Committee's recommendations.

A. Support for INCD sessions

(i) Analysis of function

16. One of the main tasks of the INCD during the interim period will be to prepare the first session of the Conference of the Parties. The Committee will consider a set of issues including matters which, pursuant to the Convention, require a decision at the first session of the COP or soon thereafter, as well as functions that the COP may wish to carry out at an early stage (see document A/AC.241/29).

17. Secretariat work in support of INCD sessions will involve the preparation of analytical documents to assist discussions on the various agenda items. Their preparation will require extensive reference materials, as well as support from consultants and UN programmes, agencies and other international organizations, and, possibly, depending on guidance from the Committee, ad hoc panels of scientific experts.

18. Support to the INCD also involves communication of information. Depending on decisions of the Committee, the Secretariat may be required to receive, compile and communicate to the INCD reports on measures taken by INCD members during the interim period. A related task would be to facilitate assistance to affected developing countries in the preparation of such reports. These would be new functions, which had no parallel in the activities of the Secretariat in the past. A number of questions arise in this regard, which will require further guidance from the INCD (these are addressed in document A/AC.241/29).

19. The Secretariat proposes to continue to operate the computer center during INCD sessions. However, since it is not clear whether the cost of operating the center will continue to be absorbed by the UN regular budget, as was the case in the past, such costs have been included in the cost estimate for support to INCD sessions. The regular budget may also provide some funds that could be expended on consultants and ad hoc panels, but the amount, if any, is unclear at this stage.

(ii) Estimated cost

20. Following is a preliminary estimate of the resources required annually for these activities. It assumes that the INCD will wish to use ad hoc panels to prepare materials on scientific and technical topics.

Computer centre	US$ 15,000
Consultants and ad hoc panels	US$ 343,000
Communication of information Publication and reference materials	US$ 15,000

Assistance in compiling/summarizing reports	US$	24,000
Translation and reproduction	US$	20,000
TOTAL	US$	417,000

B. Public awareness

i) Analysis of function

21. Activities aimed at raising the awareness of decision makers and the public at large, in both affected and non-affected countries, with respect to the Convention and its significance would seem appropriate at this stage. This is important to ensure that the maximum number of countries sign and ratify the Convention and to build support for its implementation. Non-governmental organizations could be partners in such activities.

22. Experience of the Interim Secretariat of the Climate Change Convention suggests that productive public relations activities could include production and distribution, with the help of the Information Unit on Climate Change (IUCC), of:

(a) a convention kit including the Convention text and an explanatory leaflet in all official UN languages and a number of unofficial ones;

(b) ten fact sheets covering major aspects of the Convention for decision makers and target audiences, initially in English, French and Spanish;

(c) guides to the Convention to reach more general audiences, which would be issued in regional versions starting with the one for Africa;

(d) a newsletter to keep key audiences up to date about the activities of the Secretariat, UN agencies and others in implementing the Convention;

(e) computerized versions of the above materials for placement on computer bulletin boards and conferences;

(f) a slide presentation to assist in promotional activities; and

(g) articles on the Convention in various publications.

23. As a complement to IUCC based activities, the Secretariat could continue to assist non-governmental organizations in producing and distributing brochures and other materials to help NGOs understand the Convention and promote its objectives.

24. Finally, the Executive Secretary and other officials of the Secretariat could give high priority, in the short term, to activities relating to the promotion of signature and ratification, as well as to public awareness, including meetings with NGOs, media appearances and participation in conferences, workshops and seminars in Africa and in other regions.

25. The establishment of a small documentation centre to meet requests for documents and other materials would also seem appropriate, as well as the continuation of the NGO unit in the Secretariat and of travel assistance to NGOs from affected developing countries to INCD meetings, as called for in the resolution on interim activities.

(ii) Estimated Cost

Production and distribution of materials	US$ 300,000
NGO attendance at INCD sessions	US$ 284,000
TOTAL	US$ 584,000

C. Facilitation of urgent action for Africa

(i) Analysis of function

26. While public awareness activities described in (B) include Africa, these are not sufficient in the African context in view of the apparent need for specific awareness raising and capacity building activities to ensure effective implementation of the urgent action for Africa. It will be recalled that the resolution invites affected African countries to prepare immediately, and implement, national and sub-regional action programmes and to propose supporting action at the regional level. It also invites developed countries and relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to support these activities and to participate in consultative processes leading to partnership arrangements. Finally, the resolution calls upon the Secretariat to facilitate this process.

27. To facilitate urgent action in Africa, the Secretariat, on request from affected countries and in partnership with relevant institutions and organizations, could:

(a) Assist in the organization of national workshops to explain the Convention and its practical consequences to officials and NGO representatives in affected countries who will be called upon to play a role in its implementation

(b) Assist in similar workshops at the sub-regional level

(c) Assist in preparing training workshops for parties involved in the consultative process leading to partnership agreements, with emphasis on the management of this process, participatory programming, the role of NGOs and local area development

(d) Facilitate, on request, the preparation of the national and subregional consultative fora

(e) Sponsor, and assist in the organization of, national hearings, and encourage the involvement of NGOs, especially at the local level, to ensure a broad participation in the elaboration and implementation of action programmes

28. The seminars and workshops would provide detailed information on key aspects of the Convention. Target audiences would include policy makers, development experts, economists and business leaders, as well as NGO and local community representatives. Due attention would be paid the coordination of initiatives and competent international organizations would be invited to participate.

29. More specifically, the Secretariat could provide advice on the preparation and implementation of action programmes, at the national and sub-regional levels, and on the organization, effective operation and improvement of consultative arrangements, consistent with Article 18 of the Implementation Annex for Africa.

(ii) Estimated cost

Studies on the management of consultative process	US$	25,000
Seminars at the national level	US$	44,000
Seminars at the subregional level	US$	180,000
National hearings	US$	230,000
NGO support	US$	300,000
Training seminars for officials of national coordination agency	US$	200,000
Assistance on organization of national and subregional fora to launch participative process	US$	160,000
Completion of activities in selected countries	US$	50,000
TOTAL	US$	1,389,000

30. The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)is considering a technical assistance project, which would provide analytical and logistical support and enhance the Secretariat's capacity to assist affected countries, notably in their efforts to implement the Convention at the local level. The project would include funds for staffing, meetings and travel. Similar projects with other organizations, using parallel funding arrangements, might assist in funding the above-mentioned activities.

D. Facilitation of interim action in other regions

(i) Analysis of function

31. The resolution on interim arrangements implicitly encourages countries outside Africa to begin implementing the Convention without delay. Consistent with the resolution and on request, the Secretariat could seek to facilitate activities relating to such implementation.

32. National studies in Turkmenistan, Khazakstan, Chili and Peru and a subregional study in Central Asia are being completed. A joint study between Israel, Jordan and the Palestinian Authority has been launched. The Secretariat may, furthermore, receive requests from other countries in Asia and Latin America to provide assistance for awareness raising activities, for the preparation of national and subregional action programmes, and for related consultative processes. The amounts for Asia and Latin America included in the cost estimate, are very preliminary and prospective. It is anticipated that activities in these regions, while not as intense, would to a large extent parallel those in Africa.

(ii) Estimated cost

Joint study in the Middle East	US$	230,000
Activities in Latin America	US$	100,000
Activities in Central Asia	US$	100,000
TOTAL	US$	430,000

E. Relationship with other conventions and organizations

33. Cooperation with multilateral organizations will be important in carrying out Secretariat responsibilities to facilitate urgent action for Africa, as well as activities in other regions, and to support INCD sessions. The coordination of activities of relevant United Nations bodies, programmes and agencies and of other international organizations, as well as NGO's, is essential to the success of the Convention. In addition, the provisions of the Convention and of the resolution on interim arrangements emphasize the importance of cooperation between the Interim Secretariat and the Secretariats of related conventions, particularly the Conventions on Climate Change and Biological Diversity. The Secretariat will benefit greatly from the experience of other conventions, and joint projects could be mounted to avoid duplication and increase effectiveness.

F. Administrative matters

34. Administrative support is provided by a Geneva based administrative unit of the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development (DPCSD) consisting of one professional officer and two general service staff. The unit, which functions within the framework of the Executive office of the Department located at the United Nations Headquarters, New York, also serves the interim secretariat of the Convention on Climate Change. While administrative arrangements to provide the staff of this unit and recruit its head have progressed, the process is still not complete.

35. Administrative support is an important element in the efficient functioning of the Interim Secretariat. Personnel administration continues to be a time consuming element of this support. The temporary character of the Interim Secretariat, the unpredictability of extrabudgetary funding and the consequent inability of the Secretariat to provide more than limited appointments give rise to particular problems in this area.

36. It is expected that the workload of this administrative unit in 1995 will tax its capacity, notably in relation to financial monitoring and support for travel arrangements before and during the sessions of the Committee. This problem will be addressed in consultation with DPCSD and with central administrative services at Headquarters.

37. Procedures required by the United Nations administrative authorities regarding arrangements for the travel of participants eligible for funding from the special voluntary fund give rise to a particularly heavy administrative workload during the weeks prior to, and during, sessions. This has been overcome through the recruitment of temporary help.

G. Staffing costs

38. As indicated in paragraph 9, the Secretariat relies on sixteen staff members, seven of whom are financed through extra-budgetary resources. The continued presence of these seven staff members is essential to the efficient operation of the Secretariat, particularly in the context of an increasing workload resulting from the beginning of the interim period and the urgent action in Africa. It is therefore crucial that present extra-budgetary staffing arrangements be extended for the full interim period. Furthermore, it would be most timely for the Secretariat to be able to proceed with new recruitment on extra-budgetary resources for a general service position relating to public information and media activities and reference unit. This would allow for a more efficient allocation of duties among staff members.

39. The activities set out in the previous sub-headings, particularly the support for urgent action for Africa, involve a certain amount of travelling by staff members. Some travel expenditures are included in estimates under sub-section II (C), but these would not cover all travel requirements. Based on

recent experience, the additional travel costs for the next year would amount to US$200,000.

40. Financial estimates on an annual basis for the extension of current arrangements, new recruitments and travel costs are shown in Appendix D.

H. Summary of financial requirements

41. Estimated financial requirements by sectors of activity are set out below. As mentioned in paragraph 15, some of these costs involved may be covered by means of parallel funding arrangements outside the framework of the Trust Fund.

Function	Cost US$
Support for INCD sessions	417,000
Public Awareness	584,000
Facilitation of urgent action for Africa	1,389,000
Facilitation of interim action in other regions	430,000
Staffing costs	1,720,000
TOTAL PROGRAMME	4,540,000

SECTION TWO: SPECIAL VOLUNTARY FUND FOR THE PARTICIPATION OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

42. By its Resolution 47/188 of 22 December 1992, the General Assembly established a Special Voluntary Fund, administered by the Executive Secretary under the authority of the Secretary General, to assist developing countries affected by desertification and drought, in particular the least developed countries, to participate fully and effectively in the negotiating process.

43. The current status of pledges and receipts to the Fund is shown in Appendix E. Total expenditures in connection with past sessions of the Committee amount to US$1,406,869. After provision for support costs and operating reserve, a balance of approximately US$500,000 remains available. In allocating the remaining funds, priority will continue to be given to least developed countries affected by drought and desertification. The Secretariat will circulate, during the session, a list of countries whose participation has been financed through the Fund.

44. Two budget scenarios are possible for the Special Voluntary Fund, depending on the level of contributions. The first would fund the travel of one representative from approximately seventy affected developing countries to two INCD meetings per year at an annual cost of US$900,000. The second, assuming insufficient contribution levels, would cover only one representative from least developed affected countries at an annual cost of US$550,000.

45. In light of the above and given the current status of the Fund, the INCD may wish to call upon potential donors to contribute to the Fund and give further guidance to the Executive Secretary concerning its future use.

APPENDIX A

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE TRUST FUND AS OF 20 NOVEMBER 1994

All figures are in US dollars

	Outstanding pledges	Contributions received	Date
MEMBER STATES			
Australia		34,915	27.07.93
		86,160	22.02.94
Canada		134,982	20.07.93
		34,747	07.11.94
Cyprus		1,000	14.05.93
Denmark		200,000	10.02.94
Finland		89,522	29.03.94
France		105,542	20.10.93
		14,520	30.09.94
Germany	(to be announced)		
Greece		5,000	19.04.94
Japan		123,300	16.03.94
Kenya		5,000	26.09.94
Netherlands		555,139	16.09.93
Norway		149,978	24.05.93
		37,993	13.12.93
		62,978	04.03.94
Spain	25,000	-	
Sweden		128,287	04.05.94
Switzerland		60,000	20.08.93
		65,310	19.07.93
		60,626	10.01.94
		120,000	03.05.94
		50,000	18.08.94
Tunisia		2,000	13.06.94
USA		200,000	24.03.93
		50,000	13.06.94
		50,000	11.94
OTHERS			
EU	57,000	-	
UNEP		250,000	25.05.93
		50,000	22.09.93
TOTAL	**82,000**	**2,726,999**	

APPENDIX B

SECRETARIAT STAFFING SITUATION AS OF NOVEMBER 1994

	Regular budget provision to 31.12.1994	Extra-budgetary funding	Total
D-2	1	-	1
D-1 / L-6	1	1	2
P-5 / L-5	1	2	3
P-4 / L-4	1	-	1
P-3 / L-3	1	1	2
P-2 / L-2 P-1 / L-1	-	1	1
Total D/P	5	5	10
Total GS	4	2	6
TOTAL	9	7	16

APPENDIX C

EXTRABUDGETARY CONTRIBUTIONS USED FOR THE RECRUITMENT OF STAFF MEMBERS

All figures are in US$

Donor Country	Contributions or pledges	Support Costs	Travel	Staff & related costs
CANADA LEGAL ADVISER	274,740	35,716	20,000	219,024 1)
SWITZERLAND ECONOMIC ADVISER	225,000	29,250	25,000	170,750 2)
USA SPECIAL ADVISOR	300,000	39,000		261,000 3)
FRANCE JUNIOR PROGRAMME OFFICER	105,542	13,720		91,822 4)
SWEDEN ASSOCIATE LEGAL ADVISER	128,287	16,677		111,610 5)
TOTAL	**1,033,569**	**134,363**	**45,000**	**854,206**

1) To August 1995
2) To December 1994
3) To December 1994
4) To February 1995
5) To April 1995

APPENDIX D

FINANCIAL ESTIMATES FOR THE EXTENSION OF STAFFING ARRANGEMENTS, COST OF NEW RECRUITMENT

Post level	Number of posts	Source of funding	Estimated Cost US$
L-6	1	to be specified	220,000
L-5	2	Canada & Switzerland	410,000
L-3	1	Sweden	155,000
L-1 / L-2	1	France	135,000
* L-4	1	probably IFAD	180,000
* L-2 / L-1	1	probably Italy	135,000
* GS	3	to be specified	285,000
		TOTAL	1,520,000

* proposed new positions

APPENDIX E

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE SPECIAL VOLUNTARY FUND

All figures are in US dollars

	Outstanding pledges	Contributions (US dollars)	Date Received
MEMBER STATES			
Australia		65,735	11.07.94
Austria	10,000		
Benin		1,000	28.07.94
Canada		77,662	22.06.93
Denmark		199,985	10.03.93
France		70,358	20.10.93
		33,641	23.12.93
		50,020	06.05.94
Germany		185,827	27.10.93
Greece		5,000	19.04.94
Ireland		71,500	15.03.94
Italy		90,744	17.11.93
Japan		300,000	16.03.94
Norway		199,985	23.02.93
		226,358	14.11.94
Portugal	25,000		
Rep of Korea		50,000	13.09.94
Spain		42,024	28.06.93
		10,000	27.10.94
Sweden		262,280	25.02.93
Switzerland		66,013	07.07.93
United Kingdom		74,460	19.07.93
		37,267	16.12.93
USA		50,000	24.03.93
OTHERS			
EU	57,000		
TOTAL	**92,000**	**2,169,859**	